

Welcome back!

Welcome back to another edition of the Hematopolitics newsletter! It's been a while since our last issue and a lot has happened since then. In this edition, you'll find various project updates including recent events, the exhibition's de-installation, and news on our new mailing list. We've also dedicated two pages to our wonderful symposium!

Project Updates

Inside the Blood Exhibition with KLPO

On 10 May, we were delighted to welcome the Korea Leukemia Patient Organization (KLPO) to the Thackray Museum of Medicine in Leeds. KLPO's co-presidents, Mr Gijong An and Ms Eunyoung Lee, shared the history of their organisation and its advocacy work for blood patients in Korea. They also reflected on their experience of taking part in the Blood Bag Workshop, co-led by the Hematopolitics research team and textile artist Leigh Bowser, founder of the [Blood Bag Project](#), who also shared her reflections on holding the workshop in international contexts.

In addition to our international guests, we were joined by local visitors from the Leeds community, including individuals with personal experiences of blood conditions, which created a meaningful opportunity for global connections and solidarity. During the event, everyone was invited to write messages to blood donors and patients around the world, many of which expressed deep gratitude to blood donors and shared words of encouragement and hope.

Following the workshop, participants were given a special tour of the Blood: Ties and Tensions exhibition, guided by curator Jack Gann, where they also viewed KLPO's handmade blood bags displayed alongside the Thackray's historic collections.

The event was a great success, thanks in no small part to the wonderful support of our student volunteers from the University of Leeds, who warmly welcomed our guests and provided translation throughout the day.



Be Curious

On 17 May, Jini Kim and Leigh Bowser joined forces to educate Leeds' children (and adults!) at the University of Leeds' 'Be Curious' event. The event encourages children to engage with academic research in playful and experimental forms. Jini and Leigh showcased their new children's book, *Amazing Blood Ties!*, a fascinating tale of blood donation and transfusion through the eyes of children. The event was a huge success attended by hundreds of children, many of whom reported new understandings of blood and its potential to change lives.



De-Installation of 'Blood: Ties and Tensions'

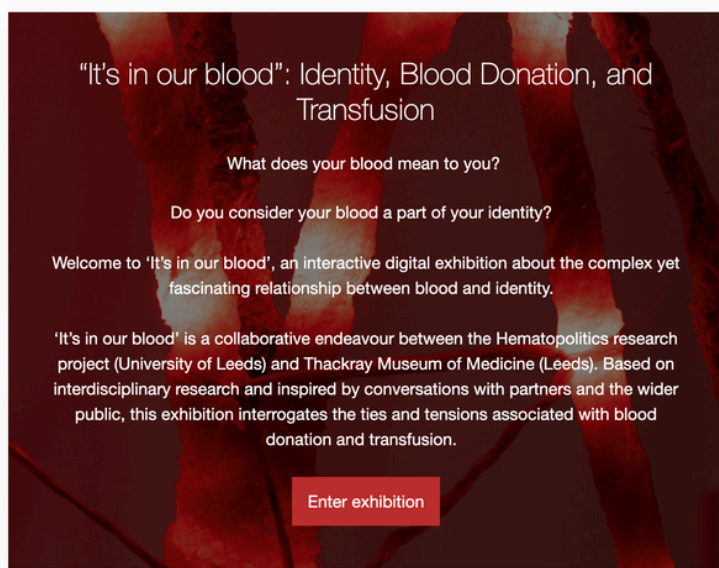
Monday 30th June marked the beginning of the end of 'Blood: Ties and Tensions' at Thackray Museum of Medicine in Leeds, as the exhibition is de-installed to make way for their next exciting endeavour. The exhibition, which launched in February 2025, scrutinised the significance of blood donation and transfusion across the past 150 years. Central to this exhibition was its many collaborations with local communities, museum staff, and the exhibition's fantastic artist, [Gemma Wood](#). Explored by thousands of visitors, 'Blood' has received invaluable feedback, and has even convinced some of its visitors to donate blood! We wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone who visited and contributed to the exhibition. If you visited 'Blood' and would like to provide us with your thoughts, please feel free to get in touch with us – any feedback is welcome!



Digital Exhibition

While 'Blood: Ties and Tensions' draws to a close, our [digital exhibition](#) continues online! "It's in our blood": Identity, Blood Donation, and Transfusion', is the product of months of research, collaboration, and curation. It features a range of historic and contemporary objects (including 3D scans!), compelling stories about blood donation, and a series of co-produced items including blood bags, posters, and other artistic interpretations of blood and identity.

We are always looking to increase the content of our digital exhibition. Do you have a story about blood, or perhaps an object associated with donation you'd like to share? Would you like to create an artistic piece to be featured on the website? Our call for contributions towards the digital exhibition is always open. Please email our Digital Engagement Fellow, Claire, via our Hematopolitics email address with any details.



Did you know?

Did you know it is now possible to find out your blood type from the comfort of your own home? The **Eldon Biologicals Blood Type Testing Kit** allows you to test your own blood anywhere at any time. The toolkit is particularly useful for people living in countries prone to natural disasters, where emergency blood donations are required more often.



"Our love can make the bird fly!"

Our Mailing List

Did you know we have our own Hematopolitics mailing list? This allows you to share your news, be that a publication, event, or something else, directly with our Hematopolitics network! Simply send your completed email to hematopolitics@jiscmail.ac.uk and it will promptly arrive in the inbox of every list subscriber.

Members' News

Hematopolitics Symposium 2

On 6 June, we hosted the second Hematopolitics symposium at Thackray Museum of Medicine in Leeds. 'The Politics of Blood Donation and Transfusion: Histories, Controversies, and Futures' was a one-day event involving speakers from across the globe whose research represents the rich, interdisciplinary field of work on blood donation and transfusion.

The event featured a fantastic keynote from Dr Jenny Bangham (University of Edinburgh), followed by a series of panels, each tackling a key methodology or issue associated with donation and transfusion. Entitled 'Recreating Blood Relations: Kinship, Mass Transfusion and Genetics in the Mid-Twentieth Century', Bangham's keynote explored the story of transfusion, genetics, and power in the mid-twentieth century. Using a rich array of source material, she argued that transfusion and genetics were practices that were often shaped by notions of 'race'.

The first panel, 'Transfusion as Transformation', featured two brilliant talks from Samin Rashidbeigi (Rice University) and Sangeeta Chattoo (University of York). Rashidbeigi's paper on 'Socializing Blood: An Iranian Case of Cadaveric Blood Transfusion during the Cold War' scrutinised the practice of blood transfusions from cadavers in twentieth-century Iran. Through a series of fascinating case studies, she argued that translation and political activism often influenced ideas surrounding medical innovation. She also noted the strong American interest in the practice of cadaveric transfusions in this period.

Chattoo's paper, entitled 'Liquid Life: Transfusions, A Poisoned Chalice and the Politics of Hope', investigated blood donation from the perspective of recipients who have thalassemia. Focusing on Indian healthcare settings, she highlighted the sheer complexities of the inability of these people to replicate or repay the debt of blood. Centring on recipients as opposed to donors, Chattoo's paper offered new insights into the precarities surrounding self-care.

After lunch, we enjoyed a tour of the 'Blood' exhibition, before hearing from our Digital Engagement Fellow, Claire Turner, on her experience in curating the digital exhibition. She was joined in a panel discussion by Jini, where they reflected on their experience in collaborating with the museum. In her paper on 'Blood and Identity: Reflections on a Digital Exhibition', Claire centred her talk on her experience of working with members of the local community on their experiences of living with 'different' blood.

The final panel of the day, 'Imagining New Futures through Blood', explored the potential of blood in present and future medical practice. We heard from Morteza Hashemi (University of Nottingham), Emily Avera (Colgate University), and Neil Stephens (University of Birmingham), who all provided fascinating insights into their research.

Hashemi's paper on 'A Grassroots Ethno-Religious Ritual of Giving Blood: Imam Hussain Blood Donation Campaign in the UK' explored the challenges of identity politics in the field of health policy. Focusing on a British Muslim blood donation campaign, he argued for supporting the existing health-related rituals of ethno-religious communities.

Avera's paper, entitled 'Of Blades and Blood Tests: The Cutting Edge of Lab Automation in South African Blood Services', examined how blood service staff balance the safety and efficiency benefits of automation in relation to South Africa's labour economy dynamics. Centring her analysis on a specific medical instrument designed for South African blood services, she argued that automation remains contested and inefficient.

Stephens' paper on 'Growing Blood and Meat: Future Visions of Big Tissue' drew upon the Wellcome-funded 'Big Tissue' project, which scrutinised the practices of large-scale tissue engineering. Stephens demonstrated how the promissory narratives surrounding cultured blood continue to be challenged, especially in social, economic, and biological contexts.

As the day drew to a close, we invited attendees to join us for a fantastic buffet in the city centre. We would like to thank all attendees, speakers, and Thackray Museum for a brilliant day, and we look forward to networking again in the near future!



Get in Touch!

Do you have an upcoming event, publication, or CFP you'd like to share with our network? We are always looking for new resources, connections, and experiences! Get in touch with us via our email: hematopolitics@leeds.ac.uk

You can also keep up with all the latest news about the project via our social media! Follow our BlueSky account [@hematopolitics.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/hematopolitics.bsky.social) for opportunities to network, news on events, and updates on our upcoming exhibition.

For a text-only version of any of our newsletters (incl. posters and graphics), please get in touch with our Digital Engagement Fellow, Claire, via our email address.